

Thursday, October 4, 2012 – A view from the stands

Day One at the FCI World Agility Competition in Liberec, Czech Republic

5:45 AM we all met in the lobby of our hotel and got on the bus for the arena. The team had 8 minutes at 7:30AM to practice on the equipment. We then returned back to the hotel for some breakfast. We then all piled back onto the bus at 1:15 and headed back to the arena for the Opening Ceremony as well as the Parade of Countries. It is pretty spectacular to see 34 countries come marching in one country at a time sporting their colors.

When the Large Dog Team Competition started, Team USA was listed as the 19<sup>th</sup> team. The course presented numerous places where a team could find trouble if not careful as many countries sadly learned. It is now Team USA's turn with Silvina Bruera with her Border Collie "TCAM" running first and ran a sizzling time of 28.86 seconds on a course that had a SCT of 34 seconds at 162 yards. The next team to run was Channan Fosty with her Border Collie "Icon" and they ran a beautiful clean run with a time of 30.10. Next in the order was Daisy Peel with her Border Collie "Solar" they had a run that promised to be at a winning pace when all of a sudden the straight tunnel caused them some trouble and received a refusal call. Even with this unfortunate difficulty they brought in a time of 31.78 and a 5 point deduction. The last team to run was Tori Self with her Border Collie "Revolution". It was up to Tori to bring in a clean run if Team USA was to be in the running for a placement in the competition. With everyone holding their breath Tori and Rev negotiated the course flawlessly and came in with a time of 28.96 which put Team USA into first place! Needless to say that watching our team run with such ability and depth was a very proud moment.

There were many other countries that had to run yet including but not limited to Slovenia, France, Poland, Italy, and Norway. Norway was the last team to run in the competition and if it were not for a dropped bar they were showing some promise or getting into the final standings. When all was said and done Team USA Large Dog Team competition came in first and won GOLD.

The closing ceremony was wonderful to watch when seeing our team standing up on the podium while our National Anthem was being played. The final standings for day one Large Dog Team was: Team USA First with a score of 87.83, Slovenia second with 88.59, Switzerland third with 89.25 and Belgium fourth with 89.82. It truly is amazing how close the competition was considering there were 4 members per team and 34 teams competing. The best three of each team was counted and their times compiled into one score. There was only 2 seconds between First place and Fourth place when all was said and done.

Tomorrow, day 2, our Small and Medium teams will be able to compete against the best in the world. I am sure that there will be plenty of great runs and all of us will be chanting "Team USA, Team USA" well, OK, I do hear some others chanting in a language I do not understand but I am sure that they also are rooting for their country to prevail.

Full results can be found online at <http://results.agility2012.cz/>